

Las universidades desconocidas

[The Unknown Universities]

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1- The 30 curtains made for the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo were made by two different teams. Alex and Valentina from Plató, a shared office/studio space at Galeria Metropole in the center of the city, made 15. The other 15 curtains were made by a cooperative of women embroiders called Bodadeiras de Jardim Conceição, located at the western periphery of São Paulo.

2- The Unknown University is the title of a book of poems by Roberto Bolaño. I am interested in borrowing it mainly because of its ambiguity. It proposes something, a moment, an almost abstract place, to which we can all relate to, either by a direct and nostalgic connection or by the lack of this connection, which can also be nostalgic. Clashing with this the unknown is proposed, what we cannot control or direct. It's a constant push and pull, between our educational memories and what lies ahead, what can still happen, our self-construction.

3- The Unknown University tells us about autonomy, about how one is ultimately its own best guide. Bolaño remarks: "I believe that in the formation of every writer an unknown university guides his steps, which obviously, has no fixed location, it is a mobile university, but common to all".

4- My Unknown University in São Paulo then is my travels between the center and the periphery. It is to build the work in a horizontal dialogue with the fabricators. It's to listen to live music, sometimes two simultaneous bands, in the small plaza at Galeria Metrópole. It's to try to learn how to travel by train and bus to Jardim Conceição, like everyone else does. It's to eat together. It's to improve my *portuñol* to the degree of learning Portuguese.

5- The public also carries infinite unknown universities, which could be projected onto the work. The curtains are manipulable, the public can touch them and move them... play with them, play with the multiple, almost inexhaustible, formal combinations. In itself, this action is an act of learning, basic yet it's there, it's an opportunity. The infinite unknown universities then will be added to each curtain and their configurations. After 3 months they will possibly make them look used and dirty.